

Claims

1. A portable monitoring device for characterized in that it is comprises

- 5 - monitoring means for monitoring the presence of at least one monitored item, said monitoring means comprising
- polling means (11) for transmitting a poll signal to at least one carrier device arranged on a monitored item, said poll signal having predetermined characteristics identifying the monitoring device (3) and the carrier
- 10 - receiving means (13) for receiving a response signal from the monitored item
- position means (15) for identifying the monitored item on the basis of characteristics of the response signal.

2. A monitoring device according to claim 1, wherein the position means is arranged 15 to determine the position of the monitored item on the basis of characteristics of the response signal.

3. A monitoring device according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising action means 20 (17) for taking action if the position means determines that the distance between the monitoring device and the monitored item is greater than a predefined threshold distance.

4. A monitoring device according to claim 1, 2 or 3, further comprising action 25 means (17) for taking action if no response signal is received within a predetermined period of time.

5. A monitoring device according to any one of the claims 3 or 4, wherein said action means (17) is arranged to take action by transmitting a deactivating signal to deactivate the monitored item.

6. A monitoring device according to any one of the claims 3-4, wherein said action means (17) is arranged to take action by issuing an alarm.

7. A monitoring device according to any one of the claims 3-6, wherein the action means (17) is arranged to activate a camera associated with the transmitting unit,

8. A monitoring device according to any one of the claims 3-8, wherein the action means (17) is arranged to display the determined position of the monitored item on a display screen.

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9. A monitoring device according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the polling means (11) is a short-range transmitter.

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10. A monitoring device according to any one of the claims 1-8, wherein the polling means (11) is arranged to transmit the poll signal on a radio frequency.

11. A monitoring device according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the polling means (11) is arranged to transmit the poll signal by means of a telecommunications network.

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12. A monitoring device according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising output means (12) for controlling the function of a communication device on which the monitoring device is arranged.

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13. A carrier device (7) arranged to be placed on a monitored item (5) and comprising

- receiving means (21) for receiving a poll signal from a monitoring device, said poll signal having predetermined characteristics identifying the monitoring device and the carrier

- response means (23) for transmitting a response signal to the monitoring device, said response signal enabling the monitoring device to identify the carrier device.

5 14. A carrier device (7) according to claim 13, wherein the response means (23) is arranged to transmit the response signal in response to the poll signal.

10 15. A carrier device (7) according to claim 13 or 14, wherein the response means is arranged to transmit a response signal enabling the monitoring device to determine the position of the carrier device.

16. A carrier device according to any one of the claims 13-15, further comprising deactivation means (25) for deactivating a function of the monitored item in response to a deactivating signal received from the monitoring device.

15 17. A carrier device according to any one of the claims 13-16, further comprising deactivation means (25) for deactivating a function of the monitored item if no poll signal has been received from the monitoring device in a predefined period of time.

20 18. A carrier device according to any one of the claims 13-16, wherein said response means is a short-range transmitter.

19. A carrier device according to any one of the claim 13-16, wherein said response means is a radio frequency transmitter.

25 20. A carrier device according to any one of the claims 13-16, wherein said response means arranged to transmit the response signal through a telecommunications network.

21. A carrier device according to any one of the claims 13-20, further comprising output means for controlling the function of an item on which the carrier device is arranged.

5 22. A method for monitoring the presence of a monitored item comprising the steps of

- transmitting a poll signal from a monitoring device to a carrier device arranged on the monitored item, said poll signal having predetermined characteristics identifying the monitoring device and the carrier device,
- 10 - transmitting a response signal from the carrier device to the monitoring device, said response signal enabling the monitoring device to determine the position of the carrier device
- taking action if it is determined that the distance between the monitoring device and the carrier device is greater than a predetermined threshold distance.

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23. A method according to claim 22, wherein the response signal is transmitted in response to the poll signal

20 24. A method according to claim 22 or 23, comprising the step of taking action if no response signal is received in the monitoring device within a predefined period of time.

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26. A method according to claim 24 or 25, wherein the step of taking action includes transmitting a deactivating signal from the monitoring device to the carrier device.

27. A method according to any one of the claims 22-26, comprising the step of taking action if no poll signal is received in the carrier device within a predetermined period of time.

5 28. A method according to claim 26 or 27, wherein the step of taking action includes deactivation by the carrier device of a function of the monitored item.

10 29. A method according to any one of the claims 22-28, further comprising the step of displaying the position of the carrier device on a display unit associated with the monitoring device.

30. A mobile telephone characterized in that it comprises a monitoring device according to any one of the claims 1-12.

15 31. A credit card comprising an electronic circuit, characterized in that it comprises a carrier device according to any one of the claim 13-21.